

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1499

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 8789

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, PK

SUBJ: BHUTTO INQUIRES ABOUT WHEAT AND EDIBLE OIL ON
BASIS DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT NIXON

1. AFTER DISCUSSION ON MIDDLE EAST CRISIS AT MY MEETING
WITH PRIMIN BHUTTO EARLY EVENING OCTOBER 9 AT HIS REQUEST,
BHUTTO APOLOGIZED FOR TURNING TO MORE MUNDANE MATTER
WHICH HE SAID WAS VERY HIGH ON HIS MIND. HE REFERRED TO TALKS
WITH PRESIDENT NIXON LAST MONTH DURING WHICH HE
HAD EMPHASIZED CRITICAL PROBLEM FACING GOP OF PROVIDING
ADEQUATE WHEAT SUPPLIES FOR POPULATION IN WAKE OF FLOOD
LOSSES. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD PRESIDENT THAT GOP WOULD
LIKE 500,000-600,000 TONS OF WHEAT ON CONCESSIONAL
TERMS (PL 480 AND CCC) FROM US AND WOULD LOOK ELSEWHERE
FOR BALANCE OF ITS NEEDS. BHUTTO SAID PRESIDENT HAD
REMARKED AT THAT POINT TO DR. KISSINGER TO EFFECT THAT
"WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN TO HELP PAKISTAN IN THIS MATTER."

2. BHUTTO RECALLED THAT HE HAD TOLD PRESIDENT NIXON
HE HOPED PAKISTAN WOULD ALSO BE ABLE OBTAIN AT LEAST
60,000 TONS EDIBLE OIL FROM US UNDER PL 480, ALTHOUGH
COUNTRY NEEDED ACTUALLY SOME 100,000 TONS. ON THIS TOO,
HE SAID, PRESIDENT HAD LEFT MATTER OPEN.

3, I SAID IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT NO ENCOURAGEMENT
HAD BEEN OFFERED TO BHUTTO PARTY IN WASHINGTON ON
AVAILABILITY OF CONCESSIONAL WHEAT BEYOND 100,000 TONS
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WHICH PRESIDENT HAD OFFERED 2 MONTH AGO, AND THAT SERIOUS
CONSTRAINT ON OUR SUPPLY POSITION HAD BEEN EXPLAINED
DURING WASHINGTON MEETINGS AND EARLIER. ON BASIS HIS
PRESENT APPEAL REFERRING TO SPECIFIC CONVERSATION WITH

PRESIDENT, I TOLD BHUTTO I WOULD INQUIRE AT ONCE AS TO WHETHER THERE WAS ANY CHANGE IN SITUATION. I SAID I WOULD ALSO ASK ABOUT STATUS OF GOP REQUEST FOR EDIBLE OIL, WHICH ALSO REMAINED IN EXTREMELY TIGHT SUPPLY.

4. FINANCE SECRETARY GENERAL KAZI, WHO WAS PRESENT AT MY MEETING WITH BHUTTO, CONFIRMED MY SUGGESTION THAT HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN GIVEN NO ENCOURAGEMENT, DURING HIS OWN MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON AS MEMBER BHUTTO PARTY, ON LIKELY AVAILABILITY OF FURTHER CONCESSIONAL WHEAT THIS YEAR.

5. IN RESPONSE MY QUERY, BHUTTO AND KAZI REPORTED THAT POSSIBILITY OF 260,000 TONS WHEAT FROM CANADA HAD EMERGED FROM RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH THAT COUNTRY. 20,000 MIGHT BE MADE AVAILABLE AS GRANT AND THE BALANCE FOR CASH OR UNDER THREE-YEAR CREDIT. BHUTTO ADDED THAT GOP HAD ALSO APPROACHED USSR TO PROVIDE WHEAT TO HELP MEET CURRENT PAK EMERGENCY. HE REFERRED TO RECENT SOVIET OFFER OF SOME 2 MILLION TONS TO INDIA AS WELL AS SOVIET HELP TO BANGLADESH ON WHEAT. BUT, HE SAID, "WE DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE" ABOUT ASKING RUSSIANS TO HELP. IN ANY EVENT, HE SAID, HE WAS PREPARED TO PRESS US HARD ON THIS POINT BECAUSE ISSUE WAS SO VERY IMPORTANT TO PAKISTAN AND IT HAD TO LOOK TO ITS FRIENDS FOR HELP.

6. CONVERSATION THIS SUBJECT CONCLUDED WITH MY REITERATION THAT I WOULD RAISE MATTER PROMPTLY WITH WASHINGTON.

7. I HOPE WE CAN GIVE BHUTTO SOME REPLY FAIRLY PROMPTLY ON STATUS HIS PERSONAL APPEAL AND DISCUSSION WITH THE PRESIDENT IN SEPTEMBER. ANY EASING OF OUR CEILING ON CONCESSIONAL SUPPLY OF WHEAT AND EDIBLE OIL, I CAN ASSURE YOU, WOULD BE VERY DEEPLY APPRECIATED BY BHUTTO AND GOP BECAUSE THEY KNOW OF OUR OWN SERIOUS SUPPLY PROBLEM AND BECAUSE THEY DO FACE A POTENTIALLY SERIOUS SUPPLY SHORTAGE, ESPECIALLY IN WHEAT. BUT IN ANY EVENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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IT IS DESIRABLE FOR GOP TO FEEL CLEAR ABOUT US SUPPLY SO THAT IT CAN TAKE EARLIEST STEPS TO INSURE PAKISTAN'S REQUIREMENTS ARE MET (E.G., BY COMMERCIAL PURCHASES) TO DEGREE THAT IS POSSIBLE.
SOBER

NOTE: NODIS CAPTION DELETED PER MR. PICKERING, S/S-O
10/10/73.

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